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FBI arrests one of its own in spy case



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WILLIAM WEBSTER:
'Sad day' for the bureauBy Paul Clancy
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It was, FBI Director William Webster said Wednesday, a "very sad day."

In the first case of its kind, an FBI agent, Richard W. Miller, was arrested Tuesday on charges of passing secrets to Soviet KGB agents.

Miller, a 20-year veteran, is accused of giving a female Soviet agent documents the FBI says would give "a detailed picture of the FBI and U.S. intelligence activities, techniques and requirements."

The case gives a dramatic glimpse of the KGB's spy network and the U.S.'s counters to it. And the case shows that despite high-tech wizardry, spying may come down to old-fashioned motivations: money and human chemistry.

Clearly, the FBI was shaken by the incident.

Webster said the case was "an aberration on the proud record of patriotic and dedicated service" of the FBI. Spokesman John Hoos said at a Los Angeles press conference the bureau was feeling "very sensitive."

Miller is hardly classic James Bond. At 47, he's the father of eight, paunchy and graying. The alleged Russian

agent, Svetlana Ogorodnikova, 34, is hardly a Mata Hari. At her arraignment yesterday, she appeared plain. She is slight, about 5 feet tall, and has short straight blond hair, a sharp nose and sunken cheeks.

Svetlana and her estranged husband, Nikolay Ogorodnikov, "both covert agents" the government says, had been under surveillance since 1980. She was a nurse; he was a butcher. They lived upstairs in a simple stucco building just off Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. But Svetlana, the FBI has charged, was a major in the KGB.

According to the FBI's affidavit filed Wednesday, Miller — who met Svetlana in his job interviewing Russian emigres — was in financial trouble and Svetlana offered a "sympathetic" ear and a way out of his money troubles.

The FBI said Miller admitted demanding \$50,000 in gold for delivering the documents and in August requested \$7,000 in cash plus \$1,000 in expenses.

Miller was denied bail at a hearing Wednesday in San Diego because, federal prosecutors said, "Flight is a real strong risk."

If he is found guilty, Miller could face life imprisonment.

John Moot, a federal public defender who represented Miller at the bail hearing Wednesday, said, "I can tell you right now STAT going to enter a plea of not guilty."

Despite many pages of admissions, Moot said, "Those statements are going to have to be looked at very closely" to be sure they were correctly obtained. "There are a lot of unanswered questions."

Miller's arrest was the third case of alleged espionage brought to light in the past two days, an indication, some experts said, of a tough new policy of cracking down on Soviet operations and information leaks.

■ On Tuesday, the FBI announced the arrest of Samuel Loring Morison, 40, an analyst with the Naval Intelligence Support Center at Suitland, Md., on charges of giving three classified photographs of a Soviet aircraft carrier to the British publication, *Jane's Defence Weekly*.

■ Also Tuesday, Alice Michelson, 67, an East German, was charged with receiving classified information from an Army sergeant working as a double agent.

The affidavit said Miller, "admitted having numerous personal meetings with Ogorodnikova from late May 1984 to late September 1984." The FBI refused to confirm press reports that the two were romantically involved.

Said Allan E. Goodman, associate dean of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service: "It's a reminder that if all the allegations of falling in love are true, even in an age of very sophisticated electronic spying, the old methods sometimes work best."

Added former CIA agent Walter Pforzheimer, "If (the KGB) found somebody in straits, particularly financial, it's quite a classic case, it's a classic technique."

Agents observed four September meetings between Miller and Svetlana.

"This," says John K. Greaney, executive director of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers, "demonstrates how bold the Soviets are to make this kind of move. They're relentless. They feel pretty confident nobody is watching what they're doing here . . . They go as far as they can until they get caught. They're like a vacuum cleaner — they want to collect anything."

Former CIA Director Richard Helms said the KGB got more sophisticated under the late Yuri Andropov. Helms was CIA head when Andropov ran the KGB. "Andropov did a lot to modernize the KGB and sort of bring it into the 20th Century," he said. But Helms said the Miller case doesn't appear to reflect much sophistication. The KGB may simply have found a "vulnerable target" in the FBI, Helms said.

Highlights of the FBI's affidavit:

■ Miller admitted to FBI agents that he had numerous meetings with Svetlana from May to September 1984. Miller told her about his "personal, professional and financial problems." Miller also told her that he was an analyst for the FBI and had access to FBI documents marked "secret."

■ On August 12, 1984, Svetlana asked Miller if he would be willing to work for the KGB, copying FBI documents "for which he would be paid very well by her government."

■ On August 24, 1984, Miller and Svetlana traveled from Los Angeles to San Francisco. She delivered film canisters to the Soviet consulate in San Francisco. She told Miller that she used canisters to transport reports and messages to the consulate.

Goodman said the significance of the case is not that there may have been a "rotten apple" in the FBI — "but that the Soviet KGB is a very large, very sophisticated, very dedicated intelligence service and it's constantly targeting the U.S. and apparently able to make inroads into agencies whose personnel are so carefully screened as the FBI's."

Said Jim Bamford, author of *The Puzzle Palace*, a book on the National Security Agency, "Once you've sold one secret, you're hooked. They don't start by asking to get a top secret document. They usually ask for something innocuous, like a telephone directory. Once a person starts, they're hooked at that point."